is adjusted to the pH at which L-glutamic acid is precipitated, to produce and accumulate L-glutamic acid and precipitate L-glutamic acid in the liquid medium.

REMARKS

Claims 1-24 are active in this application. Support for Claims 14-16 is found in Claims 3, 11 and 13. Support for Claims 17-24 is found in Claim 10. No new matter is added.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Davis for the helpful suggestions provided throughout the Official Action mailed September 13, 2002. With few exceptions, those suggestions have been incorporated into the claims by amendment.

Concerning "metabolize" and "grow" in Claims 1, 2, 11, and 12, Applicants point to the specification on page 9, line 27 to page 10, line 3 and page 10, lines 22-24 wherein the terms have been defined. For example: "the expression that a microorganism 'can metabolize the carbon source" means that it can proliferate or can consume the carbon source even though it cannot proliferate." Therefore, a microorganism can metabolize without growing and as such Claims 2 and 12 further limit Claims 1 and 11.

Concerning the characteristics (a) and (b) included in Claim 4, the claim does not recite that they are alternatives but rather that the microorganism has one or both (a) and (b): "which has at least one of the following characteristics." Therefore, no amendment is believed to be necessary.

In light of the amendments and the remarks submitted herein, Applicants request that the objections to the claims as well as the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 101 and 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph be withdrawn.

In the event the Examiner requires clarification or has any questions concerning this application, she is invited to contact the Applicants' undersigned representatives to resolve the matter expediently.

In light of the foregoing, Applicants submit that the present application is now ready for allowance. Early notification of such allowance is kindly requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Amended) An isolated [A] microorganism which can metabolize a carbon source at a specific pH in a liquid medium containing the carbon source and L-glutamic acid at a saturation concentration [and the carbon source], and has the ability to accumulate L-glutamic acid in an amount exceeding the amount corresponding to the saturation concentration in the liquid medium at the specific pH.

2. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim 1, which can grow in the liquid medium.

3. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim 1 [or 2], wherein the pH is not more than 5.0.

4. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to [any one of claims 1-3] claim 1, which has at least one of the following characteristics: (a) the microorganism is [enhanced] increased in activity of an enzyme that catalyzes a reaction for biosynthesis of L-glutamic acid; and (b) the microorganism is decreased in or deficient in activity of an enzyme that catalyzes a reaction of a pathway branching from a biosynthetic pathway of L-glutamic acid and producing a compound other than L-glutamic acid [by].

5. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim 4, wherein [the enzyme that catalyzes the reaction for biosynthesis of L-glutamic acid is] an activity of at least one selected from the group consisting ofcitrate synthase, phosphoenolpyruvate carboxylase and glutamate dehydrogenase is increased.

6. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim [4 or 5] 1, wherein the enzyme that catalyzes the reaction of the pathway branching from the biosynthetic pathway of L-glutamic acid and producing the compound other than L-glutamic acid is α-ketoglutarate dehydrogenase.

7. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to [any one of claims 1-6] claim 1, wherein the microorganism [belongs to] is from the genus *Enterobacter*.

8. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim 7, which is *Enterobacter agglomerans*.

9. (Amended) The isolated microorganism according to claim 8, which has a mutation that causes less extracellular secretion of a viscous material compared with a wild strain when cultured in a medium containing a saccharide.

10. (Amended) A method for producing L-glutamic acid by fermentation, which comprises culturing [a] an isolated microorganism as defined in [any one of claims 1-9] claim 1 in a liquid medium of which the pH is adjusted to [a] the pH at which L-glutamic acid is precipitated, to produce and accumulate L-glutamic acid and precipitate L-glutamic acid in the liquid medium.

11. (Amended) A method for [screening] identifying a microorganism suitable for producing L-glutamic acid by fermentation [with precipitating] accompanied with precipitation of L-glutamic acid in a liquid medium, which comprises inoculating a sample containing microorganisms which have the ability to produce L-glutamic acid into an [acidic] liquid medium containing a carbon source and L-glutamic acid at a saturation concentration [and a carbon source], and selecting a strain that can metabolize the carbon source.

12. (Amended) The method according to claim 11, wherein a strain that can grow in the liquid medium is selected as the strain that can metabolize the carbon source.

13. (Amended) The method according to claim 11 [or 12], wherein [a] <u>the</u> pH of the <u>liquid</u> medium is not more than 5.0.

Claims 14-24 are added.